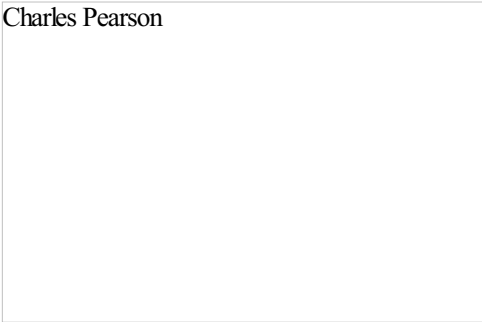


# Liftoff: Summer rocket camp for kids

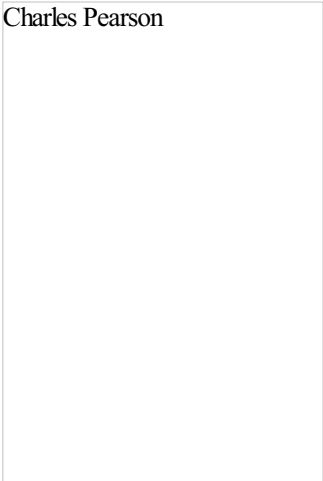
By Kimberly Hirai, University of Idaho, Idaho National Laboratory Nuclear Science and Technology communications summer intern



Camp registrants received a one-year membership to the National Association of Rocketry (NAR), a one-year subscription to Sport Rocketry magazine and liability insurance.

Rockets of all colors and sizes decorated the Idaho Falls sky above Bonneville High School's baseball field Friday, July 27 at the Idaho Falls Model Rocketry Club (IFMRC) and Idaho National Laboratory Center for Space Nuclear Research's (CSNR) first summer rocket camp.

About 34 students launched rockets they built at the three-day camp. There, participants learned about aerodynamics, calculating the altitude of an airborne rocket and assembling propulsion systems. Many rockets traveled more than 100 yards in the air after launch and had streamers or parachutes for landing. The CSNR funded cost of the rockets and all materials. INL was also a sponsor for the event.



Hillcrest High School student Joe Cespedes, 16, helped students load igniters into rockets.

The camp marked 10-year-old Tanner Kvarfordt's first introduction to rockets. The Temple View Elementary student launched two rockets with three generations of his family at the event, including his mother and grandfather.

"He's not really a camp kind of kid, but he's really enjoyed this one," said Tanner's mother, Kellie Kvarfordt. Kellie works in the Nuclear Programs department at INL.

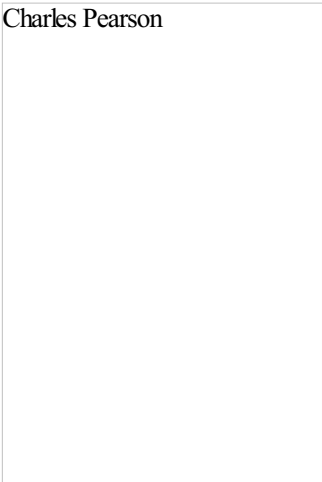
Her father, Charles Brooks, is a retired INL employee and helped his grandson assemble the rockets at the camp. Tanner made an Alpha and an Alpha III. One rocket--painted white with red, white and blue fins and a red top--traveled 56 yards.

Brooks said his grandson was ready for his next project. "He's got it figured out what he wants to buy now. He was telling me in the car. It cost \$27, whatever it was," he laughed.

Richard Thomas, a mathematics teacher at Bonneville High School, and David Spencer, IFMRC president, led the event. Spencer is an engineer in the Nuclear Nonproliferation Division department at INL. He was happy with the accomplishments both entities had made when organizing the event.

"I think the camp was very successful this year, especially being the first year," he said.

Spencer and Thomas also initiated the help of a high school student to run the camp. Hillcrest High School student Joe Cespedes, 16, helped students load igniters into their rockets and assemble them. Cespedes has had an interest in rockets for two to three years. He launched a Liquidator at Friday's event. The rocket allows students to place something in a separate section of the rocket, which separates from the rocket when it returns to the ground. Cespedes loaded his with Mountain Dew.



Many of the rockets traveled more than 100 yards upward after launch and had streamers or parachutes for landing.

In addition to students' rockets, sponsors also launched an Estes Oracle rocket during the camp's finale. Participants lined up on the baseball diamond's third baseline to watch the rocket's launch. The three-foot rocket has a digital video camera that records its path from liftoff to return.

Twelve-year-old Eagle Rock Junior High School student Katie Whitmore, the only girl enrolled in the camp, painted her Sizzler rocket a metallic gray and named it the "Silver Bullet." The camp marked Whitmore's first experience with rockets. But being outnumbered didn't faze her.

"I just thought it was real fun," she said.

Whitmore's mother looked at it as a way for her daughter to engage in something scientific.

"I just think it's a really good opportunity for the kids to learn about science in general and rockets specifically," said Cindy Fife. Fife works for the Idaho Cleanup Project.

CSNR Director Steven Howe hoped the event would encourage some students to further pursue activities in the field.

"The Center for Space Nuclear Research looks forward to seeing some of these students joining our research activities in a few years," he said.

Spencer plans to improve upon this year's camp. He said many of the participants expressed an interest in a high-altitude contest. He hopes to implement that concept into plans for next year, as well as a possible contest to launch the rocket with the highest altitude with a specific payload.

Camp registrants received a one-year membership to the National Association of Rocketry (NAR), a one-year subscription to Sport Rocketry magazine and liability insurance.

The next Idaho Falls Model Rocketry Club meeting will be held Tuesday, August 14t at 7 p.m. in the Idaho Falls Public Library.

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